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TAB A

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

[REDACTED] NSC review completed

19 May 1981

BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: 28 May NSC Meeting: US Policy in Central America and the Caribbean

1. IG Meetings. The basic strategy paper (completed in March) evolved from a series of IG meetings chaired by State Department Counsellor McFarlane. C/LA/DDO represented CIA and solicited comments on earlier drafts from NIO/LA and C/LA/OPA. I judge (C/LA/DDO disagrees) that CIA's overall impact on the analytical aspects of this essentially State-DOD product was limited. There was no CIA participation in the two follow-on papers (Counterinsurgency and Economic Development). [REDACTED]

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2. SIG Meeting. Deputy Secretary Clark, on 16 March, chaired a SIG meeting on an earlier version of the basic strategy paper, with A/DDO and C/NIC attending. Deputy Secretary Carlucci, reflecting a DOD concern that the exercise overstated US military capabilities, urged that the Cuban and Soviet "Strategic Elements" (2 of a total of 8) not be considered by the NSC until separate SIGs devise overall strategies toward those countries. A compromise was reached: the comprehensive approach was retained; notices were attached to the Cuban and Soviet portions indicating the need for separate SIG exercises. If this dispute reemerges, recommend that DCI approve discussion of Cuban and Soviet strategies: they are essential to a workable approach; as presented, they are rather elastic and can be included for "general blessing"; these and other elements will get arduous fine tuning. [REDACTED]

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b. NFAC agrees that an integrated approach is long overdue and believes the one presented is comprehensive and balanced. Definition of a basic strategy is but the first essential step. Delineation of the strategic elements and successful implementation will be major undertakings. []

4. DCI Briefing. Unlikely, but one on Cuba and one on Nicaragua-Honduras are provided.

5. Policy Decisions for NSC (page 4, Executive Summary)

a. Recommend DCI approval of general strategy: this is a commendable start on a long, tough journey.

b. Relative priority: "enhanced" vs "all-out" packages. Recommend "all-out" for improving political, economic, and social conditions; "enhanced" for security assistance, confronting Cuba, and changing Nicaragua. This approach is most likely to generate international and Congressional support. Major near-term conflict with Cuba and efforts to overthrow Sandinistas would endanger this support, as would too conspicuous moves toward security assistance.

c. Consultations. Hard to oppose, but to be effective must emphasize economic and political reforms.

6. This Background Memorandum has been discussed with C/LA/DDO and C/LA/OPA. []



Jack Davis
NIO/LA

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